

Introducing Twitter: How it can work for your business



SuperMac Office Solutions Ltd or S.O.S – owned and managed by Lin MacDonald offers a freelance PA and admin service to small businesses and individuals.

Since the New Year we have experienced an increase in the number of clients looking to use Twitter.

More and more we are being told that small businesses need to get more involved with social media.

The under 35's have grown up with Facebook, You Tube and My Space etc. Older people are more reluctant to use these particular online social media sites and frankly most don't see the point of them but do appreciate the need for a more online presence to get their businesses seen.

Although more people are using a business Facebook page these days a lot of people still but do keep Facebook strictly for close friends and family.

Linkedin is perceived as the Facebook for business and is more formal. Twitter bridges that gap.

Do many people Twitter?



- 108 million users world wide
- 20% or 21.6 million active users
- 84% users aged 35 and over
- Target audience of 18.2 million

the first question people exploring the idea of using this media asks is do many people actually Twitter?

In January 2010 it was estimated that there were 108 million users world wide, it is thought to be growing at the rate of 14 million per month.

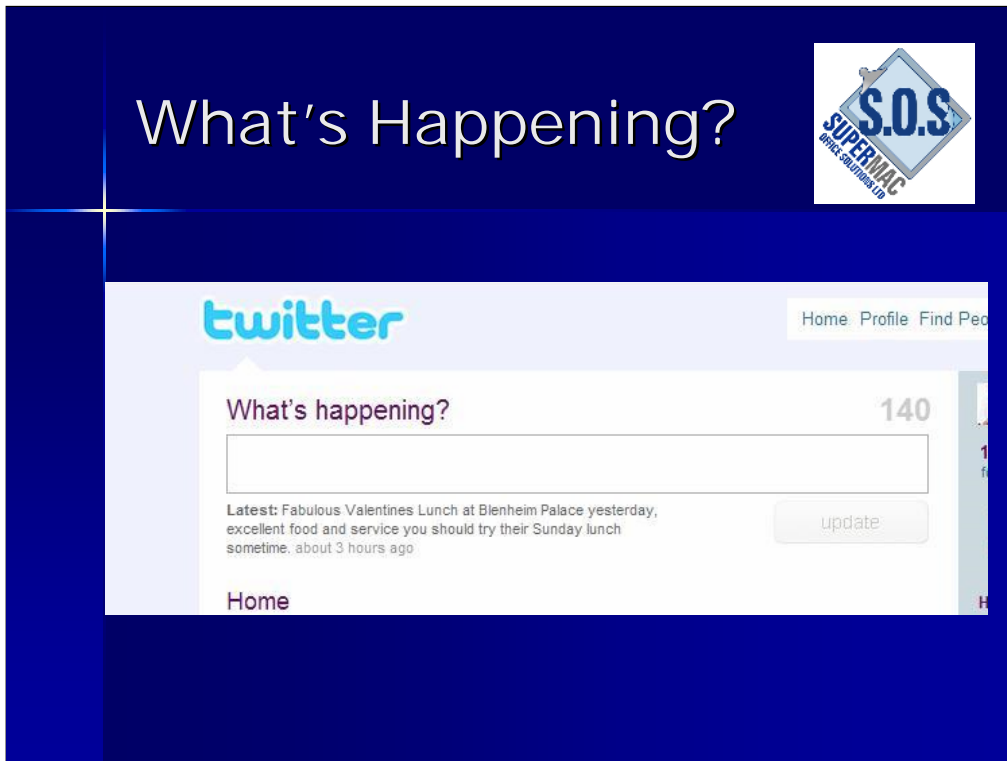
USA is the biggest Twitter country by population 67%, followed by UK 8%, Canada 6% then Australia 2.8%.

Not all users are active, in fact 80% of Twitter accounts are inactive – but that does still leave a whopping 21.6million people out there who are TWEETING worldwide.

Taking into account that 84% of all users are estimated to be aged 35yrs and over and most probably fall into the target market your business is looking for this still gives you a target audience of 18.2 million. Doesn't it make sense to take Twitter seriously?

So, how does it work?

What's Happening?



Twitter takes the basic “what are you doing” box from Facebook and LinkedIn, changes it to “What’s happening?” and uses it to share real time information, comments, links, pictures, data etc with your followers.

In order to gain followers you firstly need to follow people yourself – competitors, industries that compliment your business, clients, suppliers....

By growing your followers and Tweeting frequently your posts will soon get to be read by a number of different people.

If they like what you Tweet about they will then “re- Tweet” your posts to their own followers who, in turn may follow you.

As you grow your profile and your network of interested followers and in turn attract the interest of their followers- you start to increase traffic to your website.

People begin to recognise you as an expert in your field

140 Characters – No Way!



- “Small business owners spend over 15 hours per week on admin...why not outsource tasks and concentrate on doing business or enjoy the free time”

[140 characters]

The “What’s happening” dialog box allows you 140 characters.

Peoples first reaction to that is – what on earth can I say in only 140 characters that can be understood or will be of value to anyone?

Above is an example of such a Tweet.

Hopefully that message makes you think about what you are doing with your own time,

maybe make you wonder about the person who has posted the Tweet maybe make you curious enough to check out their website?

As with face to face networking, success comes from relationship building.

If you come across as being likeable, generous and knowledgeable you are on to a winner – if you can show your human with a sense of humor brilliant!

The actual process of “Tweeting” is simplicity itself;

You can make a comment,

you can use the 140 characters as a compelling headline with a link to your website or perhaps a blog, where your “Story” is written in more detail. Or you can ask a question to engage followers in conversation.

Start with a basic page ...



Once your page is set up you will find you have a very basic page which uses Twitter's own backgrounds and avatars – the Twitter site has a small library of different backgrounds and colour schemes you can choose from, but why not customise your page to reflect your own business?

Reflect your website....



Using your own logo and cheesy photo's you can definitely make your Twitter page your own..

let it reflect your website – tell potential clients about your products.

Use your home page to tell people what you do – stamp it with your own identity

Consider your Tweet Content



- Is this Tweet too personal
- Is it too much of a sales pitch
- Does it reflect what my business is about
- Does it encourage my followers to answer my question and engage in conversation

What do you need to consider?

First remember Tweeting is still networking and needs to be social too.

No one wants to know that you are still in your dressing gown waiting to have a shower, but on the other hand people do not appreciate being bombarded with direct sales messages.

People like tips, links to interesting articles and stories – we very often Tweet tips about how to be more productive.

People like exclusive deals – why not run a promotion exclusive to Twitter users, give it a unique ID code to enable you to test and measure it's success.

People like the human touch and a sense of humor – share your thoughts and funny experiences it goes down well and can engage people in Twitter conversations.

People also love it when you simply say hello, respond to their questions, comments and jokes.

One culture that has grown with Twitter is Follow Friday where it is has become a tradition that on a Friday, funnily enough - you can suggest to your followers people on Twitter they may like to check out - perhaps its someone you have recently worked with, someone who has given you some help or simply because you have enjoyed reading their Tweets. You just Tweet their user name to your followers who can then follow the link to find out more about them. Good for relationship building.



If Twitter success is based on the people who follow you, how do you get people to do just that?

To cultivate quality followers there are numerous sites out there as shown above which allow you to search for specific companies, specific industries even in specific locations enabling you to really target your ideal audience and maximize your impact.

To a degree etiquette or “Twittiquette” suggests that it is courteous to follow whoever follows you. The majority of Twitter users will have an automated response set up which will automatically follow their new followers.

This is great when you are new but as you become more established and have gained some experience of Twitter the quality rather than quantity of followers is preferable and we would suggest you need to ‘weed out’ the inevitable trashy followers you would have picked up along the way.

Although that said as with any networking you never know who they might be connected to but we really do suggest you weed out the “Saucy Sally’s” and “Pervert Pete’s” – not good for the image of your business!!

Ideally the ratio of who you are following to your followers should be around 1 to 1 or at the most 1 to 1.5 although until you are established it is usual to see a much higher ratio.

if you follow considerably more people than are following you, or if you do not Twitter on a regular basis you could be perceived as being a ‘Taker’ only interested in what you can glean from others and not someone who is giving and sharing – the best way to lose followers..

Does Twitter give results?



- Keeps you in the public eye
- A useful marketing tool which compliments your on line presence

So, does Twitter give you results? Well don't expect instant results, however by having a regular presence out in Twitter land people do notice you –

For one of our clients, an HR consultant we are targeting local businesses in order to gain her more followers.

Within the first ten days of being on Twitter she received a direct request through Twitter from someone needing urgent HR advise.

My client contacted them, gave some initial advice over the phone and subsequently won a retainer contract to look after the companies HR.

Another client who had only been Tweeting since March received a telephone call recently from a journalist who had been following him.

From the content of our clients Tweets this journalist had formed the opinion that our client was somewhat of an expert in his industry of Renewable Energy.

After a couple of lengthy conversations the journalist produced a full page article for the Times on Sunday Homes supplement which was published on 15th May; the only person and the only business mentioned in the entire article was those of our client.

Look and listen....



- Target your competitors followers
- Listen to your customers

We have recently been working for a client in High End hospitality – we have searched and found a number of their competitors on Twitter and have actively targeted their followers - we now have the majority of them following my client.

Twitter makes a wonderful 'Customer Service Tool' by searching for key words you can find out what is being said about your business – both good and bad.

In the UK we are a little slow at making the best use of this. In the US 54% of the top 100 Fortune companies use Twitter to 'listen' to what the public are saying about them. Here in the UK only 16% of the FTSE 100 are doing the same.

That said, companies like BT, Virgin Media and O2 all listen to tweets and have been found to respond and resolve customer complaints quicker through Twitter than they do when clients using more conventional ways of contacting customer services.

So, do you think Twitter sounds interesting?

It does take time to establish and grow a Twitter account. Just working out how to get your twitter account set-up, running and maximized to your business can take hours...

Too much trouble? Well here comes the commercial break...

Start up packages



- One to One hand holding session on setting up and managing your Twitter Account with complete 'How To' guide

- Monthly Twitter Management Package
 - One of set up fee
 - Monthly management

SuperMac Offices Solutions Ltd offer Twitter start up packages;

1. We will come to your premises for a hand holding session where we help you set up your account, help you find your way around and show you how to use various on line applications which will help you manage your Twitter account and supply you with our own 'How to Guide' with step by step instructions.

1. For an initial set up fee we will manage your Twitter account for you on a pre-paid monthly retainer package – your input will still be required, to what degree will determined by the monthly package selected.

SuperMac can..



- Create a Twitter Account for you
- Add your business logo and suitable background image
- Automate various aspects of your Twitter account
- Build your Twitter followers
- List your new Twitter account on Top Twitter Directories

SuperMac can

Create your Twitter account

Customise your home page

Set up your Tweets - the more you Tweet the more Google likes you and helps more people to find you in searches

Build your followers

List you on all the big Twitter directories

SuperMac Office Solutions Ltd



Follow us on Twitter

@LinAtSuperMac

- Sources for information: AC Neilson, eMarketeer, RJMetrics

If you are already on Twitter, you can follow us at LinatSuperMac

If your not on Twitter yet - don't be a Twit get ahead with a Tweet !

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